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The Dangers of Municipal Ownership. By ROBERT P. PORTER, director of the eleventh census. (New York: The Century Company).

Mr. Porter has furnished the opponents of municipal ownership (using that phrase in a broad sense, as including municipal operation, although carefully speaking it does not), with a clever and vigorous handbook. That they have not lost sight of this fact is evident from the pains they are taking to give it a wide circulation through the publicity bureaus which are now at work in an endeavor to offset the growing demand for a correction of the evils incident to the private ownership and operation of municipal monopolies,

The text of Mr. Porter's argument is to be found in the opening of the second chapter, where he declares that "trading with the public credit, whether State or municipal, *must of necessity* [italics mine] lead to stupendous financial liabilities, add to the burden of the voters, weaken municipal credit, bring about inequality of taxation, interfere with the national laws of trade, check industrial and scientific progress, stop invention, discourage industrial effort, destroy foreign trade, establish an army of officials, breed corruption, create an aristocracy of labor, demoralize the voter, and ultimately make socialistic communities of towns and cities" (pp. 26-27).

This quotation gives a fair idea of Mr. Porter's style and his method of argument. The whole book reminds one of Mr. Delmas closing argument in the Thaw trial. It is brilliant, perhaps, but not convincing argument. The fact that he cites Russia as an object lesson (chapter 3) is a further interesting illustration of his methods and his disingenuousness.

The book suffers by comparison with Senator Howe's *The City: the Hope of Democracy*, which is suffused with earnestness and sincerity of purpose. No matter how much one may differ with Mr. Howe as to a particular point, one never loses sight of his profound desire to be helpful; of his anxiety to serve the cause of human progress. Mr. Porter handles the usual arguments against socialism with skill; but he fails to identify municipal ownership and socialism, a rather serious omission. He is bold in statement, and vigorous in denunciation, but nowhere does it appear that his heart is in his work. He has a thesis to prove, and he goes about it with a certain ability and facility; but when he has finished, the opponent and the advocate of municipal ownership are precisely where they were when they started out.

CLINTON ROGERS WOODRUFF.